



# Grand Canyon Synod

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Dear Reader, This copy of the Synod Council Minutes has been provisionally approved through review by Synod Council members and Synod Staff. They will be officially approved at our January 2021 meeting.

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## Synod Council Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom Video Conference

Saturday, January 16, 2021

9:00 am

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### Attendance

**Synod Council members present:** Bishop Deborah Hutterer; Vice President Mr. Paul Gryniewicz; Treasurer Mr. Erik Rehms; Secretary Rev. David Brandfass; Mr. Glenn Austad; Mr. Roger Bailey; Ms. Twila Burdick; Ms. Barbara Carl; Ms. Nancy Davis; Ms. Sue Jensen; Ms. Hannah Manzanares; Rev. Tina Mills; Ms. Laura Musfeldt; Rev. Doris Nolan; Ms. Lisa Parrish; Ms. Janis Richert; Rev. Daniel Valasakos.

**Synod Council members Absent:** Ms. Beatrice Lopez.

**Synod Staff present:** Mr. Brian Flatgard, Director of Communications; The Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta, Director for Evangelical Mission and Bishop's Associate for Congregational Vitality; The Rev. Jacqueline Pagel, Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Faith Formation; Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, Director for Administration and Events.

**Visitors:** Ms. Judith Roberts, Program Director for Racial Justice Ministries, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; The Rev. Len Hoffmann, consultant for the Grand Canyon Synod Capital Campaign; Ms. Myrna Wells-Ulland, President, Grand Canyon Synod Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### Devotions

Bishop Deborah Hutterer led the Dwelling in the Word on Amos 5:24 and the opening prayer.

38 **Education on Diversity**

39 Ms. Judith Roberts, Program Director for Racial Justice Ministries,  
40 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, led a conversation on diversity,  
41 equity, and inclusion.  
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44 **Call to Order**

45 With a quorum present Mr. Paul Gryniewicz called the meeting to order at  
46 9:45 A.M.  
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49 **Adoption of the Agenda**

50 The Rev. David Brandfass moved  
51 **MSP SC21.01.01 to adopt the agenda as presented.**  
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54 **Adoption of Minutes**

55 Ms. Sue Jensen moved  
56 **MSP SC21.01.02 to adopt the November 21, 2020 minutes of the Grand**  
57 **Canyon Synod Council.**  
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60 **Consent Agenda Items**

61 Mr. Glenn Austad moved  
62 **MSP SC21.01.03 to accept the Consent Agenda Items: Bishop Report;**  
63 **Director of Evangelical Mission / Bishop's Associate for**  
64 **Congregational Vitality Report; Bishop's Associate for Candidacy**  
65 **and Faith Formation Report; Bishop's Associate for Mobility and**  
66 **Leadership Report; Report of the Vice President; Director of**  
67 **Administration and Events Report; Director of Communication**  
68 **Report; Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona Report; 3E (Educate,**  
69 **Equip, Enact) Lilly Report; Grand Canyon Synod Women of the**  
70 **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA) Report, as**  
71 **presented.**  
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73 **Treasurer's Report**

74 The Treasurer's report was shared and reviewed. We are thankful for the  
75 mission support received from GCS congregations and for the excellent cost  
76 management of the GCS synod staff.  
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79 Ms. Sue Jensen moved  
80 **MSP SC21.01.04 to accept the Treasurer's Report dated November 30,**  
81 **2020 with an increase in net assets of \$37,240.**

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#### 84 **Roster Changes**

85 Rev. David Brandfass moved  
86 **MSP SC21.01.05 to change the roster status of The Rev. Adele Stiles**  
87 **Resmer from active to retired effective February 14, 2021; The Rev.**  
88 **Abigail D. Byrd from active to retired effective January 4, 2021; The**  
89 **Rev. B. Melissa Harr from active to retired effective February 1, 2021.**

90  
91 The Rev. David Brandfass moved  
92 **MSP SC21.01.06 to issue synod calls to The Rev. Richard A. Peterson**  
93 **to serve Faith Lutheran Church, Yuma, Arizona (AZ), effective**  
94 **January 1, 2021 and to The Rev. Martha Neff Stum to serve Our**  
95 **Saviour's Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ, effective January 1, 2021.**

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97 The Rev. David Brandfass moved  
98 **MSP SC21.01.07 to remove Celebration Lutheran Church, Peoria, AZ**  
99 **from Synod Administration effective December 31, 2020.**

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101 A member of the synod staff will send a letter to the leadership of Celebration  
102 Lutheran Church, Peoria, AZ notifying them they are no longer under Synod  
103 Administration.

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#### 106 **Congregations in Transition**

107 The report on Congregations in Transition was reviewed with six  
108 congregations served by a full-time interim pastor, and eight congregations  
109 served by part-time interim pastors. In addition, three congregations have  
110 recently extended calls. Looking forward it is expected that three  
111 congregations will be entering the call process.

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113 We are beginning our relationship with the Rocky Mountain Synod (RMS) in  
114 the area of managing congregation transitions.

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#### 116 **Recess**

117 Mr. Paul Gryniewicz declared the meeting to be in recess at 10:12 a.m.  
118 Mr. Paul Gryniewicz called the meeting back to order at 10:25 a.m.

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121 **Strategic Discussion and Action**

122 Feasibility Study and Recommendations

123 The Rev. Len Hoffmann joined the meeting and presented the findings of the  
124 Feasibility Study and his recommendations for moving forward with a synod  
125 wide appeal. A \$500,000 goal is believed to be achievable. It was noted to  
126 clarify what was meant by “Mission Society” and “Education.” The  
127 recommendation is to focus on **(Area 1)** Lilly Grant 3-E Programs; **(Area 2)**  
128 Campus Ministry, new and emerging ministries; and **(Area 3)** Lutheran  
129 Engagement and Advocacy in Nevada (LEAN) and Lutheran Advocacy  
130 Ministry Arizona (LAMA). There is a need to identify major donors to help  
131 kick off the campaign. The team will have to figure out how to do the  
132 congregational side of this appeal, so it is a broad-based appeal. A leadership  
133 team will need to be appointed to develop a theme and communication. The  
134 upcoming Synod Assembly needs to put its stamp of approval on the appeal.  
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Endowment and Gift Policies

138 The goal of the gift policy of the GCS is to be good stewards of proposed gifts  
139 to the GCS. The policy has been written so that the GCS can be ready to  
140 effectively receive gifts that are in alignment with our mission. The Executive  
141 Committee will review restricted gifts and make recommendations to the  
142 Synod Council. It will be the policy that unrestricted gifts will be tithed to the  
143 churchwide organization with ninety percent going to a newly created  
144 endowment fund. This is a policy that can be easily adapted by the Synod  
145 Council as conditions change. It was noted that the ELCA Foundation is  
146 available to help congregations set up similar policies.  
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149 The proposed Endowment structure was reviewed. The GCS Endowment will  
150 be wholly owned by the GCS. The professionally managed ELCA Foundation  
151 “Fund A” will be the investment vehicle. The Executive Committee will be the  
152 custodians of the fund with distribution at the rate recommended by the  
153 ELCA Foundation with quarterly distributions forwarded to a holding  
154 account. Release for ministry projects would be at least semi-annually. The  
155 Endowment structure will be contained in a continuing resolution that  
156 requires a two-thirds majority for adoption or any future changes.

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158 Bishop Deborah Hutterer and the entire Synod Council thanked Ms. Barbara  
159 Carl for her diligent and faithful work over several years to bring the Gift  
160 Policy and Endowment Continuing Resolution to fruition.  
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163 Spring Gatherings

164 There will be three Zoom based gatherings instead of the conference-based  
165 gatherings of previous years. The gatherings are scheduled for Saturday,  
166 February 6, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.; Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 6:30  
167 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; and, Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
168 There will be five main points to the meetings including encouraging people  
169 to consider serving as a voting member to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly,  
170 Bible study, and information on the GCS appeal.

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172 Members of the Synod Council were encouraged to attend as many of these  
173 meetings as possible to get a flavor of the interaction.

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176 Prayer Partners

177 Zoom’s breakout room function was used to randomly place synod council and  
178 staff into prayer partner groups for the coming year.

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181 2020-2021 Audit

182 The Metz Accounting and Audit firm has been selected by the Audit  
183 Committee to conduct the 2020-2021 audit of the GCS financial position.

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186 Iglesia Luterana Mexicana

187 The Executive Committee moved to support the Iglesia Luterana Mexicana  
188 (ILM) with a gift of \$15,000 from the Legacy Fund to assist the ILM in  
189 reconstructing a parsonage as a first step in developing a vibrant relationship  
190 between the GCS, the ILM, and the ELCA. The Southern Ohio Synod is also  
191 participating in this effort.

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194 GCS Grants for 2021-2022

195 There were twenty-three applicants for the grant cycle that ended this past  
196 Fall. Initially there was approximately \$100,000 available to grant for  
197 approved projects. Because there were so many exciting requests another  
198 \$51,000 was added to the amount available to support redeveloping  
199 congregations and exciting innovative initiatives. The grant team was  
200 thanked for their faithful work.

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GCS (Region 2, synod D) Data Kit

The Research and Evaluation office of the ELCA provided the GCS with a data kit of regional demographics and congregational statistics to bring forth insight, facts, and understanding for GCS leaders as we seek to improve our evangelical mission. It was noted that the GCS has a significant number of congregations with one or less baptisms over the past year.

### **Breakout Groups**

The Synod Council, Synod Staff, and visitors participated in small break out groups to discuss what excites us about what we have heard today, what questions do you have, and what is one concrete step the synod council can take to support the work of the GCS in 2021. The results were shared verbally with the council and will be forwarded to Bishop Deborah Hutterer in writing by the various breakout group note takers.

### **New Business**

GCS Gift Acceptance Policy

The Rev. David Brandfass moved

**MSP SC21.01.08 to accept the Gift Policy of the Grand Canyon Synod as presented which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.**

GCS Endowment Structure

Ms. Barbara Carl moved

**MSP SC21.01.09 to accept the proposed Endowment Continuing Resolution as presented which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit B**

238 Accept the GCS Appeal

239 The Rev. David Brandfass moved

240 **MSP SC21.01.10 to approve the Grand Canyon Synod appeal as**  
241 **proposed in the prospectus which is attached to these minutes as**  
242 **Exhibit C.**

243

244 Bishop Deborah Hutterer moved

245 **MSP SC21.01.11 to amend SC21.01.10 to read, “to approve the**  
246 **“~~Supplying the Needs of the Saints~~” Grand Canyon Synod**  
247 **appeal as proposed in the prospectus which is attached to**  
248 **these minutes as Exhibit C.**

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250 The public name of the appeal will be determined by appeal leadership at a  
251 later date.

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253 Mr. Glenn Austad moved

254 **MSP SC21.01.12 to contract with The Rev. Len Hoffmann to be the**  
255 **Campaign Consultant at a cost of \$20,000 for the period Feb 1, 2021-**  
256 **Jan 31, 2023.**

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259 Synod Council Handbook

260 A task force including Ms. Laura Musfeldt, Ms. Hannah Manzanares, and  
261 Ms. Lisa Parrish was established to complete the GCS Council Handbook.

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264 Security

265 Following two other ELCA bishop’s communication with their synods, and at  
266 the request of several GCS rostered leaders, a letter was sent to the GCS  
267 rostered leaders about congregational security during the upcoming period.  
268 Members of the Synod Council were copied on a “for your information only”  
269 basis.

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272 Vice-President

273 Mr. Paul Gryniewicz shared that due to health concerns he will not be  
274 available to run for a second term and he will be willing to answer any  
275 questions about serving as the GCS Vice-President with anyone who is  
276 interested.

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280 **Evaluation**

281 In summary: The Zoom meeting format and pre-meeting materials are  
282 greatly appreciated, and it may also be nice to have some type of social event  
283 for Synod Council members. Synod Council members are also looking forward  
284 to having prayer partners.

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287 **Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

288 Bishop Deborah Hutterer led a closing prayer based on Dr. Martin Luther  
289 King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

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292 **Next Meeting**

293 Saturday, March 10, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

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296 Respectfully submitted,  
297 Rev. David Brandfass, Secretary